REVIEW

A review of Colin J. Ewen and Harry van der Hulst. 2001. *The Phonological Structure of Words. An Introduction.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 274. ISBN 0-521-359147.

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Recent five years have witnessed the appearance of several new phonology textbooks, such as Davenport and Hannahs (1998), Gussehoven and Jacobs (1998), Roca and Johnson (1999), Carr (1999) and Gussmann (2002), to mention just a few. This comes as no surprise in view of numerous important developments taking place in this field of research which require frequent updating of such publications. A phonology instructor is, therefore, in a very convenient and perhaps better than ever situation in having a large selection of introductions to contemporary phonological theory to choose from to suit the needs of his students and his own theoretical preferences. The appearance of a new textbook which encounters such strong competition on the market raises, however, several questions. What theoretical approach does it advocate? What is its scope and specific angle? How different is it from the remaining available sources and what gap does it intend to fill? In this review we shall focus on the answers to these questions.

As we learn from the Preface, the book under review is addressed to students of phonology with little previous knowledge of this field apart from the basic acquaintance with phonetic theory and terminology. It is meant to be an accessible introduction to word-level phonology, with particular emphasis on the structure and major units of phonological representation, i.e., features (Ch. 1 and 2), segments (Ch. 1 and 2), syllables (Ch. 3), feet and words (Ch. 4). The scope of *The Phonological Structure of Words* is thus limited to what is stated in its precisely formulated title.

Let us state at the outset that this is not, however, an easy introduction to phonology (such as, for example, Carr's (1999) book) as from the very first pages the authors employ many technical terms and details (cf. several hundred items in the index), deal with various complex phonological controversies (e.g. the selection of distinctive features and their internal organization, different views on underspecification, etc.) and discuss a variety of competing phonological models (Autosegmental Phonology, Dependency Phonology, Government Phonology, etc.). In this respect they clearly depart from the procedure adopted, for example, by Roca and Johnson (1999: 630),[1] who "have endeavoured not to burden the reader with

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[1] For more comments on Roca and Johnson's book see Szpyra-Kozłowska (2000).

contradictory or disparate information and (...) tried to present a homogeneous picture of phonology as clear and free from debate as possible" in the belief that in the case of the beginners "it is more productive to direct all efforts to the acquisition of the basic tools of the phonological trade". Clearly, Ewen and van der Hulst's opinion on this issue is radically different. It is for each phonology instructor to determine which of these two approaches is pedagogically more useful and justified, but it seems to the present reviewer that the textbook under analysis is better suited for a more advanced rather than an introductory course in phonology.

The theoretical approach adopted in *The Phonological Structure of Words* is what makes the book different from its competitors. It is referred to as non-linear, without, however, specifying which non-linear framework it is based on. The authors' (Preface: xi) intention is not to follow any particular 'theoretical doctrine' or 'sub-theory,' but rather to "concentrate on presenting (...) the most characteristic aspects of non-linear phonology in general and show the reader how elements from various approaches might coexist in the characterisation of phonological structure". As a matter of fact, they (Preface: xi) express the conviction that "many of the claims made in the various models are not in fact independent of each other, and that claims made within the framework of one approach are often restatements of those made elsewhere". Thus, the reader finds in all chapters various elements of different frameworks, such as Autosegmental Phonology, Feature Geometry, Dependency Phonology, Government Phonology, Metrical Phonology, etc., which Ewen and van der Hulst attempt to reconcile and combine.

Furthermore, the authors wish to avoid taking a principled stand with respect to the major theoretical controversy of the last decade, namely the relation between phonological input and output structures, defined either in terms of rules (derivational approach) or constraints (non-derivational approach) in the belief that (p. 3) "much of what we have to say about the phonological representation of words is independent of whether we adopt a derivational or a constraint-based approach."

My major reservations concern two aspects of these assumptions. First of all, I question the possibility of writing a book on phonology without making a commitment to some specific theory. As correctly observed by Gussmann (2002: preface) "the notion of a theory-free theoretical approach is an absurdity". Secondly, while I totally agree with the authors (p. 244) that "any phonological theory must have a coherent view of phonological representation," I fail to be convinced that this coherence can be achieved through the claim of the 'peaceful coexistence' of various elements taken from disparate models. It is also doubtful whether the issue of phonological representation can be so neatly separated from the question of mapping it with the output structure. These two appear to be as inseparable as two sides of one coin.

As a careful reader will notice, the authors of the book under review have not, predictably, managed to avoid the adoption of specific theoretical assumptions which are not, however, clearly espoused at the beginning, but are presented in... a footnote (p. 3), where we learn that they "are assuming a model of phonology which

is essentially derivational, in the tradition of Chomsky and Halle (1968). We do not adopt here the constraint-based model of Optimality Theory." A somewhat fuller presentation of their theoretical standpoint can be found in the 2.5 page Epilogue (pp. 242-44). There we learn that the following views have been, explicitly or implicitly, expressed in *The Phonological Structure of Words*:

- the phonological level comprises input and output representations
- the output representations are obtained from input representations via the application of phonological rules which fill in, spread and remove feature-values
- some phonological rules are language-specific, other phonological operations follow from universal conventions
- there is no extrinsic ordering of phonological rules, i.e. rules are unordered
- there are no intermediate levels between the input and output levels
- both the input and the output levels are phonological in character
- the phonological output representation should contain all information necessary to derive the phonetic level (the mapping between these two levels is not discussed)

As the above list clearly demonstrates, we are dealing here which an approach which, contrary to the claims made in the Preface, does express a rather specific view of the organization of phonology. It obviously rejects constraint-based models such as Optimality Theory in favour of (frequently language-specific) phonological rules, giving up, however, the notions of rule ordering and derivations, and emphasising the importance of universal principles. In brief, what is advocated here is a rule-based non-linear model which, on the one hand, attempts to avoid the most problematic aspects of both a derivational approach, (i.e. extrinsic ordering and intermediate levels of representation) and constraint-based Optimality Theory (i.e. inability to handle some language-specific phenomena), and which, on the other hand, has the advantages of both (i.e. accepting universal principles as well as language-specific rules). Thus, the authors try to get the best of both worlds. Unfortunately, in view of the absence of specific proposals and their exemplification, their approach remains programmatic and it is to be regretted that the most interesting part of the book is so brief and incomplete.

The book consists of four lengthy chapters (between 50 and 80 pages each), entitled *Segments, Features, Syllables* and *Feet and words* respectively. Each chapter ends with a summary and very useful recommendations for further reading. The book includes also a helpful index of names, terms and languages, but, regrettably, lacks any exercises and problems to solve, frequent in such publications.[2]

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[2] We present here a brief sketch of the book's content. More detailed summaries can be found in Noske's (2001) and Braun's (2001) reviews.

Chapter 1, in spite of its title, focuses not so much on segments as on the smallest units of phonological structure, i.e. distinctive features. The authors start with some relatively simple issues such as the relationship between sound and spelling to quickly delve into rich and complex phonological material. They introduce and present major class features ([sonorant], [consonantal], [continuant] and [voice], then vowel features ([high], [low], [back], [round], [ATR], [tense]) and consonant features (place features, [strident] and [distributed]). From the very outset they deal with controversies concerning the selection and definition of individual features. Thus, one can find here lengthy discussions concerning, for example, different alternatives of describing vowel height or various interpretations of the feature [distributed]. Then Ewen and van der Hulst proceed to present some evidence for the grouping of features and their internal organization advancing a somewhat controversial claim that gestural representations of Dependency Phonology can be directly translated into a feature-geometrical structure. They present (p. 43) a rather unusual feature tree whose organizing nodes do not have articulatory or perceptual correlates, but are classificatory in character. The next section introduces the basic mechanisms of autosegmental phonology. Finally, the devices discussed in this chapter are employed in the description of two phenomena: Old English i-umlaut and Vowel Harmony in Turkish.

Chapter 2 is a continuation of the previous one as it is also devoted to the issue of distinctive features. More specifically, it centres round the problem of the nature of features (binary vs multivalued, binary vs monovalent) and their underspecification (theories of Contrastive and Radical Underspecification). These theoretical concepts are then applied in the analysis of, again, umlaut (in Old English and Old Norse) and harmony processes (in Yawelmani and Yoruba). The emphasis is placed on the notions of single-valued features and feature dependency advocated mainly by Dependency, Government and Particle Phonology. It is clear that the authors' sympathy lies with this particular approach to features, which is not surprising in view of their previous work within Dependency (Ewen) and Particle Phonology (van der Hulst). They demonstrate that the adoption of single-valued features is a logical consequence of Radical Underspecification.

Chapter 3, the longest part of the book (80 pages), deals with the basic elements of the syllable theory. The well-known notions pertaining to syllable structure and syllabification such as the sonority hierarchy, the Maximal Onset Principle, the Sonority Sequencing Generalization, extrasyllabicity, etc. are introduced and clarified. The role of the syllable in the operation of phonological processes and in defining phonotactic constraints is then demonstrated. The authors concentrate on two competing views of syllable structure, known as the onset-rhyme theory and the mora theory. Then illustrative analyses of /r/ in English, liaison and h-aspiré in French, and compensatory lengthening in Hebrew, Ancient Greek and English are provided. The final section of this chapter introduces the most constrained approach to syllable structure offered by Government Phonology and its basis analytic devices such as li-

censing, government and empty positions. It is not clear, however, which elements of this model can be incorporated into a coherent theory of phonological representations which the authors strive to create.

The final chapter is concerned with the unit of the foot and its role in phonology. As a matter of fact it can be considered an introduction to Metrical Phonology. Thus, the presentation of different types of feet supported with some examples taken from poetry is followed by the discussion of fixed accent and free accent systems, with the bulk of the chapter being devoted to the assumptions and mechanisms of the metrical theory (weight-sensitivity, foot typology, extrametricality, etc.,[3] with rich illustrative material taken from a variety of languages such as English, Polish, Russian, Avar, Dutch and others. English and Dutch systems of word stress are discussed in more detail in a separate section. In spite of its title (*Feet and words*), however, it focuses of feet only and does not deal with the issue of words in any detail, which I consider a significant omission. The chapter (and the book) is concluded with the already mentioned Epilogue, which outlines the authors' view the organization of phonology.

In conclusion, *The Phonological Structure of Words* contains a wealth of information on word-level phonology and phonological analysis. It provides a rich variety of linguistic data which are analysed with considerable skill, thoroughness and lucidity. The book is clearly written and well-organized, and makes a valuable addition to the list of textbooks on phonology. I do not feel, however, that Ewen and van der Hulst are successful in their attempt to combine and reconcile elements of various theories (derivational and constraint-based, Feature Geometry, Dependency Phonology and Government Phonology, etc.) and create a coherent approach to phonology. Since the book under review comprises a considerable number of technical details, many discussions of various controversial issues and presentations of several theoretical models, it is better suited for more advanced students than for complete novices.

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[3] The Polish reviewer cannot help noticing three errors on pp. 208-09, namely the incorrect spelling of the word *uniwersytet* 'university' and the wrong placement of stress in initially-stressed *'reźim* 'regime' and *'wiosna* 'spring.'

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